

## Arts & entertainment



**Farce:** harlequin Mimmo Mangione. Picture: VIRGINIA VLATKO-RULO

# A tale of two languages

**I**T'S a veritable Tower of Babel. Dialogue wings across the stage in French and Italian, and there's a dash of English thrown in for good measure. Actors begin their sentences in one language and then switch to another.

This is a rehearsal for Italian writer Carlo Goldoni's classic 18th century farce, *The Servant of Two Masters*, performed under the banner of Melbourne's French Theatre Company.

Le Theatre Francais de Melbourne has been putting on French plays for nearly 20 years.

But it has never produced a play in two languages at once.

Theatre director says Caroline Stacey, the two-language format "exposes cultural nuances and highlights the differences and similarities between nations".

"Goldoni wrote both in French and Italian, so we are remaining

**By DINA ROSS**

faithful to his concept of the stage. And using English enables me to bring out all the elements of farce."

Caroline Stacey, best known for directing *Late Night Catechism* at the Universal Theatre, combines freelance lecturing at the VCA with directing, and has worked with the French Theatre Company before.

"We have a pool of bilingual actors we can draw on and we all thrive on the challenge of working in another language. Most of us have acquired French or Italian.

"We concentrate on the classics — Moliere or Racine — and contemporary masterpieces such as works by Sartre and Anouilh," she says.

Stacey hopes that the show will also attract the larger Italian-speaking community.

*The Servant of Two Masters* is at "the old" Budinski's, 380 Lygon St, until Saturday.